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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

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WE are accuſed by the French, and perhaps but too juſtly, of having no word in our language, which anſwers to their word *police*, which therefore we have been obliged to adopt, not having, as they ſay, the thing.

IT does not occur to me that we have any one word in our language (I hope not from the ſame reaſon) to expreſs the ideas which they comprehend under their word *les mœurs*. Manners are too little, morals too much. I ſhould define it thus; *a general exterior decency, fitneſs and propriety of conduct, in the common intercourſe of life.*

CICERO

CICERO in his offices, makes uſe of the word *decorum* in this ſenſe, to expreſs what he tells us the Greeks ſignified by their word (I will not ſhock the eyes of my polite readers with Greek types) *To Prepon.*

THE thing however is unqueſtionably of importance, by whatever word it may be dignified or degraded, diſtinguiſhed or miſtaken; it ſhall therefore be the ſubject of this paper to explain and recommend it; and upon this occaſion I ſhall adopt the word *decorum.*

BUT as I have ſome private reaſons for deſiring not to leſſen the ſale of theſe my lucubrations, I muſt premiſe that notwithſtanding this ſerious introduction, I am not going to preach either religious or moral duties. On the contrary, it is a ſcheme of intereſt which I mean to communicate, and which, if the ſuppoſed characteriſtic of the preſent age be true, muſt, I ſhould apprehend, be highly acceptable to the generality of my readers.

I TAKE it for granted that the moſt ſenſible and informed part of mankind, I mean people of faſhion, purſue ſingly their own intereſts and pleaſures; that they deſire as far as poſſible to enjoy them excluſively, and to avail themſelves of the ſimplicity, the ignorance, and the prejudices of the vulgar, who have neither the ſame ſtrength of mind, nor the ſame advantages of education. Now it is certain that nothing would more contribute to that deſirable end, than a ſtrict obſervance of this *decorum*, which, as I have already hinted, does not extend to religious or moral duties, does not prohibit the ſolid enjoyments of vice, but only throws a veil of decency between it and the vulgar, conceals part of it's native deformity, and prevents ſcandal, and bad example. It is a ſort of pepper-corn quit rent paid to virtue, as an acknowledgment of it's ſuperiority; but according to our preſent conſtitution, is the eaſy price of freedom, not the tribute of vaſſalage.

THOSE who would be reſpected by others, muſt firſt reſpect themſelves. A certain exterior purity and dignity of character, command reſpect, procure credit, and invite confidence; but the public exerciſe and oſtentation of vice, has all the contrary effects.

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THE middling claſs of people in this country, though generally ſtraining to imitate their betters, have not yet ſhaken off the prejudices of their education; very many of them ſtill believe in a Supreme Being, in a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and retain ſome coarſe home-ſpun notions of moral good and evil. The rational ſyſtem of materialiſm has not yet reached them; and in my opinion, it may be full as well it never ſhould: for as I am not of levelling principles, I am for preſerving a due ſubordination from inferiors to ſuperiors, which an equality of profligacy muſt totally deſtroy.

A FAIR character is a more lucrative thing than people are generally aware of; and I am informed that an eminent money-ſcrivener has lately calculated with great accuracy the advantage of it, and that it has turned out a clear profit of thirteen and a half per cent in the general tranſactions of life; which advantage, frequently repeated, as it muſt be in the courſe of the year, amounts to a very conſiderable object.

To proceed to a few inſtances. If the courtier would but wear the appearance of truth, promiſe leſs, and perform more, he would acquire ſuch a degree of truſt and confidence, as would enable him to ſtrike on a ſudden, and with ſucceſs, ſome ſplendid ſtroke of perfidy, to the infinite advantage of himſelf and his party.

A PATRIOT, of all people, ſhould be a ſtrict obſerver of this *decorum*, if he would (as it is to be preſumed he would) bear a good price at the court market. The love of his dear country, well acted and little felt, will certainly get him into good keeping, and perhaps procure him a handſome ſettlement for life; but if his proſtitution be flagrant, he is only made uſe of in caſes of the utmoſt neceſſity, and even then only by cullies. I muſt obſerve, by the by, that of late the market has been a little glutted with patriots, and conſequently they do not ſell quite ſo well.

FEW maſters of families are, I ſhould preſume, deſirous to be robbed indiſcriminately by all their ſervants; and as ſervants in general are more afraid of the devil, and leſs of the gallows, than their maſters, it ſeems to be as imprudent as indecent to remove that wholeſome fear, either by their examples, or their philoſophical diſſertations,

diſſertations, exploding in their preſence, though ever ſo juſtly, all the idle notions of future puniſhments, or of moral good and evil. At preſent, honeſt faithful ſervants rob their maſters conſcientiouſly only in their reſpective ſtations; but take away thoſe checks and reſtraints which the prejudices of their education have laid them under, they will ſoon rob indiſcriminately, and out of their ſeveral departments; which would probably create ſome little confuſion in families, eſpecially in numerous ones.

I CANNOT omit obſerving that this *decorum* extends to the little trifling offices of common life; ſuch as ſeeming to take a tender and affectionate part, in the health or fortune of your acquaintance, and a readineſs and alacrity to ſerve them, in things of little conſequence to them, and of none at all to you. Theſe attentions bring in good intereſt; the weak and the ignorant miſtake them for the real ſentiments of your heart, and give you their eſteem and friendſhip in return. The wiſe indeed, pay you in your own coin, or by a truck of commodities of equal value; upon which however there is no loſs; ſo that upon the whole, this commerce, ſkilfully carried on, is a very lucrative one.

IN all my ſchemes for the general good of mankind, I have always a particular attention to the utility that may ariſe from them to my fair fellow ſubjects, for whom I have the tendereſt and moſt unfeigned concern; and I lay hold of this opportunity, moſt earneſtly to recommend to them the ſtricteſt obſervance of this *decorum*. I will admit that a fine woman of a certain rank, cannot have too many real vices; but at the ſame time, I do inſiſt upon it, that it is eſſentially her intereſt not to have the appearance of any one. This *decorum* I confeſs, will conceal her conqueſts, and prevent her triumphs; but on the other hand, if ſhe will be pleaſed to reflect that thoſe conqueſts are known, ſooner or later, always to end in her total defeat, ſhe will not upon an average find herſelf a loſer. There are indeed ſome huſbands of ſuch humane and hoſpitable diſpoſitions, that they ſeem determined to ſhare all their happineſs with their friends and acquaintance, ſo that with regard to ſuch huſbands ſingly, this *decorum* were uſeleſs: but the far greater number are of a churliſh and uncommu-

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nicative diſpoſition, troubleſome upon bare ſuſpicions, and brutal upon proofs. Theſe are capable of inflicting upon the fair delinquent the pains and penalties of exile and impriſonment at the dreadful manſion-ſeat, notwithſtanding the moſt ſolemn proteſtations and oaths, backed with the moſt moving tears, that nothing really criminal has paſſed. But it muſt be owned that of all negatives, that is much the hardeſt to be proved.

THOUGH deep play be a very innocent and even commendable amuſement in itſelf, it is however, as things are yet conſtituted, a great breach, nay perhaps the higheſt violation poſſible of the *decorum* in the fair ſex. If generally fortunate, it induces ſome ſuſpicion of dexterity; if unfortunate, of debt; and in this latter caſe, the ways and means for raiſing the ſupplies neceſſary for the current year, are ſometimes ſuppoſed to be unwarrantable. But what is ſtill much more important, is, that the agonies of an ill run will diſfigure the fineſt face in the world, and cauſe moſt ungraceful emotions. I have known a beſt game ſuddenly produced upon a good game, for a deep ſtake at Bragg or Commerce, almoſt make the vermilion turn pale, and elicit from lips, where the ſweets of Hybla dwelt, and where the loves and graces played, ſome murmured oaths, which though minced and mitigated a little in their terminations, ſeemed to me, upon the whole, to be rather unbecoming.

ANOTHER ſingular advantage which will ariſe to my fair countrywomen of diſtinction from the obſervance of this *decorum*, is, that they will never want ſome creditable led captain to attend them at a minute's warning to operas, plays, Ranelagh and Vauxhall; whereas I have known ſome women of extreme condition, who by neglecting the *decorum*, had flatterned away their characters to ſuch a degree, as to be obliged upon thoſe emergencies to take up with mere toad-eaters of very equivocal rank and character, who by no means graced their entry into public places.

To the young unmarried ladies, I beg leave to repreſent, that this *decorum* will make a difference of at leaſt five-and-twenty, if not fifty per cent in their fortunes. The pretty men, who have commonly the honour of attending them, are not in general the marrying kind of men;